

Interview with William True Davis Jr.

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

AMBASSADOR WILLIAM TRUE DAVIS, JR.

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

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Q: Mr. Ambassador, please give us a little of your background before you became an ambassador.

DAVIS: In adult life, I was in the Navy, and coming out, formed a small pharmaceutical company. It grew very well, and I eventually realized I couldn't finance it by myself. I had to either go public or merge it with a larger company. At that point I merged it with the Dutch Philips Lamps of Holland. Then I became eventually their president here in the United States. Our better-known products are Norelco and Philips. At that time, they had a chemical pharmaceutical division.

More than that, I became their merger specialist for the free world, and thereby developed a self-educated form of expertise in international finance. Then eventually, I was asked by President Kennedy to be ambassador to Switzerland.

Q: Before you became an ambassador, you'd had a great deal of experience, especially in the international financial world.

DAVIS: Yes, that's correct, I did have.

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Q: Had you formed any impressions about how American business performs abroad? Were there things that you saw which were right and which were wrong?

DAVIS: Yes. At that time, American business had no concept of the proper way of selling outside of this country. I would say prior to 1948-49, American exports were really just oversupply and distress merchandise, with no concept being given to marketing plans. The Europeans were vastly ahead of American industry in export knowledge. Starting in about 1950, I would say, the Americans became a little more conscious of these things. On the other hand, it would be very difficult to try to explain to a European country the ramifications of the Robinson-Patman Act and the other various anti-trust acts that we have, because they grew up thinking that a cartel was the only way to do business, which is illegal for us to do.

Q: Did you find the Department of Commerce, the Treasury Department, or the State Department playing any role, either helpful or not, in this area?

DAVIS: The Department of Commerce did as probably a good a job as they could in that time. In fact, I was chairman of one of the regional export councils for a period of a few years prior to being made an ambassador. I didn't have much time to give it, but they were trying to do their best to make export information available to particularly the smaller companies throughout the United States. Agriculture also did a good job in that regard. State, I don't think particularly did anything in that way at all. I think you almost had to go to a foreign post and ask the commercial attach# for what was there, could he help you or whatnot. That would have been my opinion at that time.

Q: Had you made it a practice to stop by from time to time at the American embassies and talk to commercial officers to see what they could do?

DAVIS: Not really, but occasionally. I used to do more of that then, than I do today. I was made ambassador 25 years ago. That's a long time! (Laughs)

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Q: We're trying to recreate the past, so I'll be asking about that period.

DAVIS: In those days, things were done in a very formal way. I don't think it's done anymore, but an American ambassador going into another American ambassador's country would always formally ask permission to come. Of course, it was always given. Then if you were in the capital, it would be unheard of if you didn't go by and at least call on the ambassador or, if he were busy or absent, leave your card. At the same time, you would visit around a little with the other staff members at that embassy.

Q: I'm talking more about the time when you were in business, before you became ambassador. Did you find it was worth your while to drop by embassies to find out about marketing or commercial problems?

DAVIS: I didn't really, because my connection with the Philips group, we already had one of the best foreign and export relations setups in the world.

Q: What led up to your becoming ambassador to Switzerland? You were ambassador from 1963 to 1965.

DAVIS: Yes. I was very surprised, myself. I had been a supporter of Senator Stuart Symington's for many years. He was from Missouri, my state. I had been very active in his run for the presidential nomination of 1960. That's when President Kennedy and Johnson, Humphrey and Symington were the four in contention. Of course, naturally, Kennedy got that. To the victor belongs the spoils, is normally the way it goes. (Laughs)

I was very surprised when I got a call, could I be at the White House on Wednesday. I was, and the President said that they were going to change the complexity of the ambassador to Switzerland, and they wanted someone in there who was connected with a large international company that was not a US-based company, and that I fit those

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qualifications, was also a Democrat, and would I serve. I said, "I'd be delighted to, and very flattered." So I did so.

My family and I were on the SS Constitution right out of Naples, when the news came that President Kennedy had been assassinated. I thought, "Well, this will be the shortest run of any ambassador," because I hadn't even presented my credentials, and it was time for me to submit my resignation. (Laughs) So I will give credit to the State Department, that within three or four hours after we had the news aboard the ship—we never did get an official message, no one got an official message aboard the ship. In fact, we were having dinner. The purser came to the table and said, "We've had some very disturbing radio reports. Please do not express any anxiety, but the captain would like to see you immediately in his quarters."

So I excused myself and went there. He said that, in his opinion, I was the senior American present aboard the ship, and he would like my advice as to what to do, because they'd been getting these radio reports, unconfirmed, that President Kennedy had been killed. So I listened to a few of them, and that was certainly correct. The airwaves were jammed, almost, with these reports. We were just outside of Naples. I said, "Can you get the Voice of America radio?" The wireless operator said, "Sure." He got that, and the Voice of America was giving the news out of Kennedy's death. So on that basis, I made the decision for the captain that we should therefore announce this news to the passengers and crew. So he asked me to do so over the public address system on the ship, and I did.

Later that night we had a mass, and Protestant services were held. I think one was at 11:00 and one was at midnight that evening, then had another service on the fantail the next morning, then put a wreath in the ocean as we were approaching Naples.

In the interim, maybe at midnight or so, I got this cable which came from President Johnson, saying, "No resignation anticipated or expected. Proceed Berne," Berne being the capital of Switzerland. That was the first official notification I had whatsoever.

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Then by the time we docked in Naples early next morning, I got another message from the State Department to please represent the President at a Catholic mass in Naples that morning. Then we got to Genoa the next morning, where we disembarked, and I was asked to again attend on behalf of the President at another mass for Kennedy in Genoa. We stayed in Genoa the one night in a hotel, then drove from there to Berne the next day.

When we arrived in Berne, I guess the word had been around that I would be arriving. It was a misty, nasty kind of evening, but there must have been maybe 400 or 500 younger people, but not all younger, carrying candles and walking down the street and through the embassy driveway in a memorial service of their own to the President. I really think that maybe the people in Europe were so sympathetic and so more outgoing in their sympathy and feelings than possibly even here.

Q: I was in Yugoslavia at the time, and the same thing held true everywhere. It was a time that I don't think anybody who experienced will ever forget, because there was something there that just touched people more than almost any other occurrence I can think of.

Prior to coming to Switzerland, did you have any preparation, instructions, of more or less what we felt we should be doing there?

DAVIS: Not much. I came here to Washington and visited, of course, each of the Cabinet departments. I talked to a number of people within the Department, of course, but I would say no specific directions of any kind.

Q: Just the other day I was talking to an ambassador who was assigned to go to Nigeria in the middle of the Biafran War, and he had no particular instructions either.

You were coming from a multinational business. Did you have any particular feelings toward American embassies, the effectiveness of them or lack of effectiveness?

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DAVIS: No. I had had no need to even expose myself to them at all, because I was primarily working for a Dutch company.

Q: How were you received? Let's talk about the embassy first, and then we'll move along to the country.

DAVIS: Very well. I was very, very happy with the relationships that were established. Everybody was extremely cooperative. I couldn't give anybody higher marks.

Q: Did you have any feeling that because you had come from outside the Service, that the Foreign Service establishment was holding back?

DAVIS: Yes, I had an anticipatory feeling of that type, but it certainly never developed. No, there was the utmost cooperation in every way. They went out of their way. I had a wonderful DCM, Henry Kellermann. In fact, I think he was a DCM for maybe three different ambassadors and charg# for two or three years, so he had a long tour over there. He was born German and, of course, spoke German, had a wonderful sense of the German people and German language. He was an ideal person to be in that post, too.

Q: Did you find that you could leave the administration more to the DCM? This is often the pattern.

DAVIS: Yes, very much so. We would have our staff meetings twice a week, and everybody would be updated as to what's going on, but generally, the DCM ran everything of that type.

Q: How about the rest of the staff? Did you feel that Switzerland was being shortchanged on personnel?

DAVIS: No. In fact, that's amusing. They had a political section and an economic section there in the embassy, each of about 12 people. To me, after some observation, I thought

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they both were doing exactly the same thing. So I decided I would merge the two together and eliminate about ten jobs. I remember Henry Kellermann, the DCM, coming to me when he first heard I was going to do this, and he said, "You can't do that."

I said, "Why not?"

He said, "The Department won't let you."

I said, "Well, if the Department won't let me, I guess I'll hear from them." And I never heard another word. (Laughs)

Q: It does often make sense. What were the United States' prime interests that you saw as the ambassador there at that time?

DAVIS: From the United States' viewpoint, economically, selling the Swiss fighter aircraft, radar equipment, some armaments, and the Department of Agriculture wanted to get popcorn in there. (Laughs) They really spent a lot of time getting that done, too. I helped them a lot, you know, by putting in a popcorn machine and loaning it around to all these fairs.

Q: Was it that popcorn wasn't used?

DAVIS: No, they didn't know about it at all. It got to be funny. Before I left, you'd see little bowls of popcorn show up in hotels and in the bars and in the restaurants. (Laughs)

Q: Did you find you were able to use your expertise? You'd been a test pilot for the Navy.

DAVIS: Yes, I was able to speak as a pilot, so to speak, to those people. In fact, at that time we secured the contract that was available at that point for fighter planes, beating out the French Mirage.

Q: What plane was that?

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DAVIS: I don't recall what model it was. Then I also remember in the radar field, the Swiss Government was about to buy a radar system from some other country, a Western European country, but this radar system was not compatible with NATO's system. I was trying to explain to these people, "My God, if you're going to put in a network that goes north and south across Eastern Switzerland and it's not compatible with NATO, you might as well turn it the other direction and expect an attack from the west." Those sort of things. You can make a lot of in-roads for economic benefits that way.

I had a wonderful relationship with the Federal Council. There are seven federal counselors, each representing a different area of their government. It's like a Cabinet member here, except that they are the absolute final word in their department. Then each of them takes turns, for one year at a time, in which they rotate the title of president of Switzerland. But that's only for ceremonial duties. They still run the military or the post office or the agriculture, or whatever it is that is their primary function.

Q: As an ambassador, how did you deal with this? This sounds like a complicated place. Did you deal with the Minister of Foreign Affairs?

DAVIS: Yes, the Minister of Foreign Affairs is one of those seven. You just have to get to know each of them and ingratiate yourself and them to you, and it's done on a very personalized basis. You do that.

At that time, Switzerland had 23 full cantons and two half-cantons, for a total of 25 cantons, which are like our states. I learned that no ambassador from any nation in the whole history of Switzerland had ever called officially on all 25 of the cantons. So I set that up as also a project to do. I know my colleagues, other ambassadors from the other countries, were scoffing at the idea of wasting my time, and why would I want to go to all of that trouble. I got about half-way through this project, perhaps two-thirds of the way through, and then the other ambassadors noticed the good press I was getting, so they all jumped on the bandwagon and started to do this. Eventually, I got all 25 done. When I

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got that done, then the foreign department put in a rule that they wouldn't allow these visits anymore without permission from them. That was primarily due, the foreign minister told me at the time, because the Russians and the Chinese wanted to do the same thing, and they didn't want them running all over their country. So that can't be done again.

Q: Is Switzerland in the United Nations?

DAVIS: No, they are not.

Q: So you were saved a tremendous amount of trouble, because one thing our ambassadors have to do so often is to say, "Please vote this way or that way."

DAVIS: Right. No, that's what makes Switzerland an absolutely delightful, wonderful post, because you don't have any AID problems, you don't have any military problems. About the only problem that was sticky at all was that we were drafting some Swiss citizens over here, those who were living here. (Laughs)

Q: During the Vietnamese War.

DAVIS: Right. That was about the only problem that I knew of. We got many Iron Curtain defectors because of the international meetings there, and getting them out of Switzerland, with no problems to the Swiss and their neutrality, was another thing.

Q: You had a consul general in Zurich. How did you deal with that?

DAVIS: The same way you would with any. To me, operating a commercial branch office is exactly the same thing. You have trust, you delegate authority, you give all the cooperation that you possibly can, and you expect that in return from the individual. We had a wonderful relationship. Howard Elting was his name. I would be in Zurich a great deal of the time just on normal business and had a wonderful relationship with him. He's a fine man, he was extremely helpful and cooperative in every way.

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Q: From an operational point of view, is it difficult to have your embassy in Berne, which is sort of backwater? I would think Zurich would be the hub of Switzerland.

DAVIS: That's why you'd be there so often. However, the embassy should be where the head of the government is. You've got the same inconvenience in Basil and Geneva. It's a little inconvenient, but it wasn't insurmountable, certainly.

Q: How was your relationship with the various international organizations? There are a whole series of them.

DAVIS: That's true, there are.

Q: Most in Geneva.

DAVIS: Most are. There are a few in Berne. In the international field, we do have an ambassador for international organizations based in Geneva, which is a part of the United Nations area. He primarily dealt with all of those. The ambassador in Berne technically should be interested only in the affairs of the country, but, of course, there is a little overlap both ways there. I gather that the personnel at the embassy felt that I should immediately almost get into a tug of war with the ambassador in Geneva, because that apparently is what had been done for many, many years. I couldn't see that at all. I made friends immediately with Roger Tubby, and we got along fine. I think this surprised my staff, because they felt that perhaps he was taking over some of our turf and his group felt we were taking over some of his turf. But that's not true; you can cooperate with everybody.

Q: You certainly can. This often is a matter of personality.

DAVIS: Yes.

Q: What about the problem which seems to have come up so often with Switzerland in more recent years, their banking practices? Was this a problem for you?

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DAVIS: I wouldn't say a problem, after you'd make the Swiss position clear to the Justice Department here.

Q: How would you describe the Swiss position?

DAVIS: Having to do strictly with their Banking Secrecy Act. The background of that Act was interesting to me, and I inquired about it a lot as to why and how. Apparently that came into being in the mid-'30s, and it was brought about because in Nazi Germany, no one was to take any funds outside of Germany. But generally, the German Jews were taking their funds out everywhere and, naturally, to Switzerland because it was so close. There are more banks in Switzerland per capita than anywhere in the world—450, I think, individual banks, as I remember at that time, and each of them had many branches.

What the Germans would do, if they suspected someone, they would make a deposit, let's say, of 100 francs to the bank account of so and so, whoever they're looking for, and they would get 449 banks advising, "There's no account here," and send the money back. But one bank would take it, and therefore they found out that way that there was an account for that person there. They violated a lot of Swiss neutrality laws in that regard, because they would catch these people there and interrogate them in the German Embassy.

In the German Embassy, which I always thought was very interesting, they showed it with a sense of humility, of course, but there were several jail cells down in the basement of the German Embassy where they detained these people and, I'm almost certain, would torture them down there. But that sort of thing is what brought about the Banking Secrecy Act, whereby it stated that any bank employee who gave away any information about any account would be subject to the equivalent of a \$25,000 fine and six months in jail. That's pretty stiff stuff for a Swiss to understand. So they didn't violate that at all.

However, as I was there in the mid-'60s, the Swiss were feeling a little bit that this Banking Secrecy Act might be a little too tough, and having numbered bank accounts probably was

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giving them a black eye throughout the world, allowing people to do a lot of illegal things through the Swiss banks. So they were gradually phasing out the secret bank accounts. They started about the time that I was there, and I understand today that it would be very difficult to get a secret bank account. Some of the signatures of those secret bank accounts were interesting.

You might have somebody draw a picture of a rooster or a picture of an elephant, and that was your signature. If you were willing to chance that somebody else wouldn't know that, why, then go ahead.

Q: But that wasn't a prime problem for you.

DAVIS: Oh, no, not really. You got a request every so often from the Justice Department that somebody would be arriving on a flight from, let's say, New York, and it would turn out to be a very attractive blonde lady. I never saw her, but I saw pictures of her that the FBI had, that they always suspected of depositing skimmed money from the casinos in Las Vegas. She'd arrive there almost on the dot every Monday morning with a little satchel. (Laughs) It just killed them that we couldn't find out what the hell she was doing with it and how much there was. But the Swiss wouldn't allow that.

Q: What about your relationship with the Soviet Embassy? At that time we didn't have any relations with the Chinese.

DAVIS: No, we didn't have then, nor with the Cubans, of course, nor the Albanians, who were there, I believe, and North Korea was there, too. Our relation with the Soviets was formal. It was all right. I used to do a lot of hunting, and I had been in Alaska in the frozen Arctic Ocean, where I shot a very large polar bear. I was telling the Russian ambassador about it, and said that I'd always wanted to mount an expedition and go into Siberia for the Siberian snow tiger, which is found up there. We were just chatting about this and he said, "Would you like for me to request permission for you?"

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I said, "That would be great! See if you can."

So in about two months, he came back to me and said, "We have permission granted for you to do that if we can send a hunting expedition for Kodiak bear in Alaska."

I said, "Well, let me inquire about that." So I made a preliminary inquiry, and they said they didn't see anything wrong with that particularly, as long as it was on that basis. That's the message I got back from State. So I gave him that message, and I never heard another word from him.

Q: Switzerland has the reputation, I guess deservedly so, of being the "spy capital." Did this involve you very much?

DAVIS: Yes, a great deal, and that was the most interesting part of the whole tour. During President Kennedy's term, it happened right before I became ambassador, up to that point the CIA chief of station was always aloof and apart from the ambassador, and President Kennedy made that very clear, that the chief of station was under the ambassador as the other employees. So that brought about a very interesting situation. I had a relationship with the chief of station that was excellent, and I remember telling him, "I'm not going to interfere with your business, and I don't really want to know anything that you're doing unless it's something that could be potentially embarrassing to the United States or to myself." So we would have a briefing every few days. He would let me read the CIA telefax that came over every day to their people, just like the one State had. It was extremely interesting to see what they were doing.

Q: It really is a center for intelligence on both sides.

DAVIS: Yes. At that time I was told we had the largest group of operatives other than in Vietnam.

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Q: How did Vietnam play in Switzerland when you were there? The great protests hadn't quite started.

DAVIS: No, it hadn't.

Q: But you were there during the buildup.

DAVIS: Right. The Swiss general public didn't think much of that. They thought we ought to be out of there, and at that point I was very hawkish in my own attitude, but finally came around to eventually recommending we get out of there, too. But at that point, they just didn't like it.

In fact, it was interesting. We had what was, I assume, the first demonstration that had ever been held in Switzerland against the Americans at our embassy. We got word from the Swiss police who, by the way, were absolutely fabulous with the information they would get to us. We were told that there was going to be a demonstration, let's say, tomorrow morning at 8:00. We didn't know what the hell to do about this demonstration, having never had one before. We did have steel shutters on the first-floor windows, so we closed those. It was raining, and I thought, "That's a good sign. That will keep down the attendance."

So finally, about 9:00, there must have been 12 or 15 men with umbrellas, came and stood outside on the sidewalk, no signs, no noise, just stood there for about an hour and a half, and that was a Swiss demonstration.

Q: Would that they were all like that.

DAVIS: Yes.

Q: How about refugees, particularly from Eastern Europe? Did you get much involved with those?

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DAVIS: No, I don't recall any.

Q: Were you getting any particular instructions from Washington of how to do various things?

DAVIS: No. It was mainly inquiries, such as one cable which said, "It's reported that Zhou En-lai is possibly in Switzerland. Could you possibly determine through discreet inquiries if such is so?" That kind of stuff.

Q: How about visitors? Were you deluged with American visitors?

DAVIS: A lot of them.

Q: Was this sort of a nuisance?

DAVIS: No, not a nuisance, because I always was happy to see them. Of interest, though, the average American family seems to think that a Swiss boarding school might be the greatest thing in the world for their children, so we'd have many, many, many inquiries of that.

I had a form letter or would talk to the people about it, but the average boarding school in Switzerland was a bankrupt hotel. The headmaster was the guy who owned the hotel that went bankrupt, so he would be happy to entertain your child for as long as you wanted to pay the bill. But most Americans get the idea that kids should go to Switzerland and learn French at the same time. Well, it's impossible to keep your scholastic standing up and learn a foreign language at the same time. So I would have to tell them, "Do you want your child to waste a year of school to learn French, or do you want them to do it the other way? Because you can't do both." But in my opinion, there are only a very few real good schools in Switzerland. An interesting part of the embassy, probably more so than most embassies, in case of a war happening in Europe, every American that could find his way was probably going to come to Switzerland. So we had a lot of information directives and

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assistance planned to take care of this onslaught of Americans that might come in case of a war. Part of that, because paper currency is no good in wartime, we had a tremendous amount of gold coins in the embassy—I mean a lot of them. Every month they would put these out on a big table and count them, to take inventory, and I'd have to sign that they were all there. One day I went down to look at them, and I'd never seen so many gold coins in my life. I picked up a few and looked at them. My God, they had some in there with dates from the early 1700s and late 1700s. I got to thinking, “My God, the numismatic value of these coins is worth more than the gold content by a long way.” So to start with, I wrote to Marshall Field's coin department, a store in Chicago that had a coin department, and asked them to give me a pricing on certain coins that were in the collection. They came back with a tremendous value on just this little sampling.

Then I wrote to the Treasury Department and State that these should be sold and we should either get just gold bullion in small bits or newer coins. Gold in those days was only \$35 an ounce. The Department never did anything on it, and I still think they should. I'll bet those coins are still over there in Switzerland.

It was amusing that when I later got back to the Treasury, in talking to one of the people there in the international field, he said, “You know, your inquiry about those gold coins when you were in Switzerland got routed to my desk, and it's still there. I still don't know what to do about it!” (Laughs)

Q: You left Switzerland in 1965.

DAVIS: Right. I came back here as Assistant Secretary of the Treasury.

Q: How did you feel about the switch?

DAVIS: Well, I can put it exactly the way I reacted. When a newspaper reporter came in to Treasury one day, and he asked, “Well, how does it feel to get back in the good ol' USA?”

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I said, "Well, it only makes one fully realize how graciously an ambassador lives." (Laughs)

Q: What were your responsibilities as Assistant Secretary of Treasury?

DAVIS: In the beginning, I had the Coast Guard and Bureau of Customs, the Secret Service, the Bureau of Narcotics, Bureau of Engraving and Printing, and relations with European bankers. Then almost immediately, however, in a reorganization in Treasury, they took the Secret Service and Bureau of Narcotics and put them into another area. Then when the Department of Transportation was formed, the Coast Guard was going to be the main part of that department, so they moved the Coast Guard away from Treasury over to the Department of Transportation. Then at that point I was appointed, in addition to Assistant Secretary of Treasury, the US Executive Director of the Inter-American Development Bank, and did both of those jobs up until the time that I left in early 1968 to run for the United States Senate in Missouri, subsequently which I lost. But that's why I left government, was to do that.

Q: Our project focuses on the foreign affairs apparatus of the United States. How did the Treasury personnel view the State Department?

DAVIS: There's always been some conflict there, particularly between those two. I can't give you any specific examples that I recall, but there was always this special alertness to be on guard from both departments. (Laughs)

Q: It continues.

DAVIS: I'll tell you an interesting story about President Johnson, though. The only reason I ran for the Senate was because the incumbent senator out there at that time was a fellow named Senator Ed Long. He'd gotten mixed up somehow with some teamsters and/or perhaps Mafia. I don't know if that's correct or not. But Life magazine had been all over him in big issues all about his association with some of these people. Johnson felt that if Long ran again as a Democrat, which he was, that he would be defeated by the

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Republicans, and therefore he wanted somebody else as the Democratic nominee. So he talked me into doing this. As it turned out, however, there were three of us in it. Senator Eagleton won that primary. So it was moot. But what I'm getting at is that Johnson said to me, "Now don't you worry about this thing."

I said, "I know I'm getting in awful late out there."

He said, "I can take care of this. I'll get you absolutely in. Don't you worry about a thing. You just go out there and do this."

I said, "Okay, okay." So I did. That's when this Vietnam pressure started building up on Johnson, to a point where about in April or May that year, he decided he wasn't going to run himself again. (Laughs) And there I was, already running out there.

Q: So one always has to look at other factors when presidents make promises.

DAVIS: That's right.

Q: Mr. Ambassador, there are two questions we ask in these interviews. Number one, looking at your time as an ambassador, what gave you the greatest satisfaction?

DAVIS: In my case, I think it was probably the representational part of when I got to all of the 25 cantons. I don't remember the name of the last canton, but it was way up in the Alps, very small, only about 10,000, 12,000 people. I couldn't get them to ever offer me a formal invitation. Finally, the consul general in Zurich told me, "The problem is that those people don't have enough money to put on a luncheon that they think they should do for you."

I said, "Tell them that I don't want any luncheon. It would be very appropriate to let me call, and they could offer me some sherry and cookies, and that would be very satisfactory." He got that message to them, so the invitation was forthcoming.

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Going up there to those people and into the top floor large room of this building, with the flags hanging and all, the cantonal officers were there, about four of them, and they were in their morning suits, so ill-fitting that you could tell they'd been borrowed and they didn't have them. I said to them, "I bring to you greetings from the President of the United States, from the largest democracy in the world to the oldest democracy in the world." And these people started crying, these men. They were so proud. It was their moment in history. I think that one little visit there made me feel more satisfied than anything else.

Q: If a young person came to you today and said, "Should I try to join the Foreign Service?" how would you respond?

DAVIS: I have in many instances said, "Absolutely do it. It's tough to get in, but when you're in, it's one of the most rewarding parts of government service." I know that from the career people's viewpoint, they don't like the idea of one-third being political appointees, but that's a fact of life and that's not going to change any, and it never will change. So with that understanding, go ahead.

Q: Very good. I thank you very much.

DAVIS: You're welcome.

End of interview